THE TRANSFORMERS
MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE
EVERYTHING IS FINE
DAYS OF DESTRUCTION
IDW
#35
ROBERTS
MILNE
SHEARER
LAFUENTE

On a quest to find the Knights of Cybertron, the starship Lost Light has been through the wringer. After coming into contact with a quantum-duplicate of itself, a "new" Rewind joins and the crew learns Brainstorm is a traitor. Before they can act—Brainstorm stands in Swerve's bar, amidst a sea of Autobot bodies.

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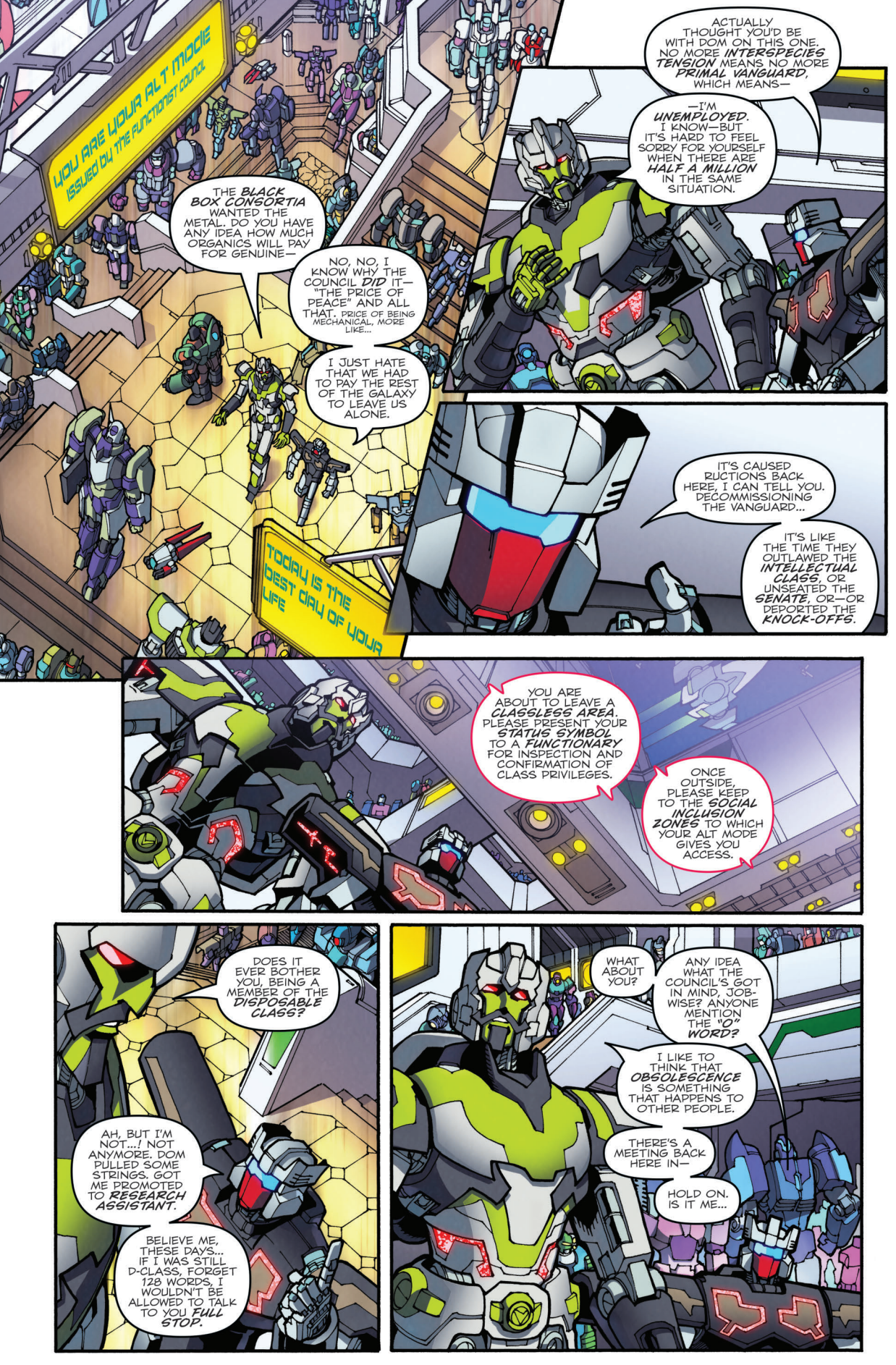
ARE YOU OKAY, MINIMUS? YOU'VE NOT SAID A WORD SINCE TOUCHDOWN.
NOW, NOW, REWIND—YOU KNOW HOW I FEEL ABOUT EXAGGERATION.
WE EXCHANGED PLEASANTRIES. I MADE A REMARK ABOUT INTERSTELLAR TRAVEL LEAVING ME DRAINED.
YOU SAID THAT IF THE FUNCTIONIST COUNCIL VALUED THEIR ARMED FORCES THEY'D PROVIDE BETTER DEEP SLEEP SLABS, AND THEN YOU PANICKED AND MADE ME PROMISE NEVER TO REPEAT—
AH.
ANYHOW, I MAKE THAT... 128 WORDS.
YOU ARE OUR EYES
YOU ARE OUR EYES
YOU ARE OUR EYES
EVERYTHING IS FINE
YEAH, 128 WORDS IN TWENTY MINUTES. THE POINT IS—MY POINT—IS YOU'RE VERY QUIET.
IS IT BECAUSE YOU WERE EXPECTING DOMINUS?
BECAUSE IF YOU WERE, HE'S BUSY—AS IN STUPID BUSY. THE COUNCIL'S REALLY BEEN PILING IT ON.
I'VE ALWAYS ADMIRED MY SPARK-BROTHER'S WORK ETHIC, BUT EVEN SO—
TWO MILLION YEARS AWAY AND HE'S NOT HERE TO GREET ME IN PERSON?
MIND YOU, HE'S NOT SPOKEN TO ME IN MONTHS...
IT'S NOT AS IF I WAS INCOMMUNICADO. EVEN BEFORE THE RECONCILIATION WE WERE ALLOWED TO TALK TO PEOPLE BACK HOME.
I THINK WHEN WE GET BACK TO THE HAB BLOCK WE SHOULD AVOID TALKING ABOUT THE RECONCILIATION. DOM STILL FEELS A BIT... WHAT'S THE WORD?
...
WHATEVER. POINT IS, YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A MOON-HUGGER TO THINK WE WERE MAD TO GIVE AWAY LUNA 2.

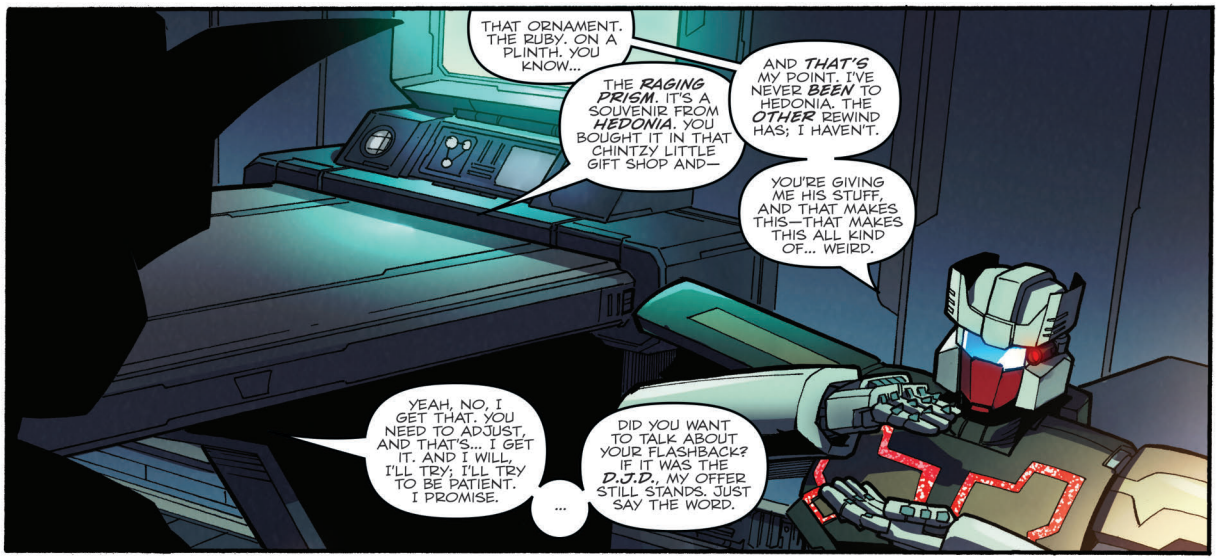

YOUR ALT MODE IS ISSUED BY THE FUNCTIONIST COUNCIL
THE BLACK BOX CONSORTIA WANTED THE METAL. DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW MUCH ORGANICS WILL PAY FOR GENUINE—
NO, NO, I KNOW WHY THE COUNCIL DID IT—"THE PRICE OF PEACE" AND ALL THAT. PRICE OF BEING MECHANICAL, MORE LIKE...
I JUST HATE THAT WE HAD TO PAY THE REST OF THE GALAXY TO LEAVE US ALONE.
TODAY IS THE BEST DAY OF YOUR LIFE
ACTUALLY THOUGHT YOU'D BE WITH DOM ON THIS ONE. NO MORE INTERSPECIES TENSION MEANS NO MORE PRIMAL VANGUARD, WHICH MEANS—
—I'M UNEMPLOYED. I KNOW—BUT IT'S HARD TO FEEL SORRY FOR YOURSELF WHEN THERE ARE HALF A MILLION IN THE SAME SITUATION.
IT'S CAUSED RUCTIONS BACK HERE, I CAN TELL YOU. DECOMMISSIONING THE VANGUARD...
IT'S LIKE THE TIME THEY OUTLAWED THE INTELLECTUAL CLASS, OR UNSEATED THE SENATE, OR—OR DEPORTED THE KNOCK-OFFS.
YOU ARE ABOUT TO LEAVE A CLASSLESS AREA. PLEASE PRESENT YOUR STATUS SYMBOL TO A FUNCTIONARY FOR INSPECTION AND CONFIRMATION OF CLASS PRIVILEGES.
ONCE OUTSIDE, PLEASE KEEP TO THE SOCIAL INCLUSION ZONES TO WHICH YOUR ALT MODE GIVES YOU ACCESS.
DOES IT EVER BOTHER YOU, BEING A MEMBER OF THE DISPOSABLE CLASS?
AH, BUT I'M NOT...! NOT ANYMORE. DOM PULLED SOME STRINGS. GOT ME PROMOTED TO RESEARCH ASSISTANT.
BELIEVE ME, THESE DAYS... IF I WAS STILL D-CLASS, FORGET 128 WORDS, I WOULDN'T BE ALLOWED TO TALK TO YOU FULL STOP.
WHAT ABOUT YOU?
ANY IDEA WHAT THE COUNCIL'S GOT IN MIND, JOB-WISE? ANYONE MENTION THE "O" WORD?
I LIKE TO THINK THAT OBSOLESCENCE IS SOMETHING THAT HAPPENS TO OTHER PEOPLE.
THERE'S A MEETING BACK HERE IN—
HOLD ON. IS IT ME...

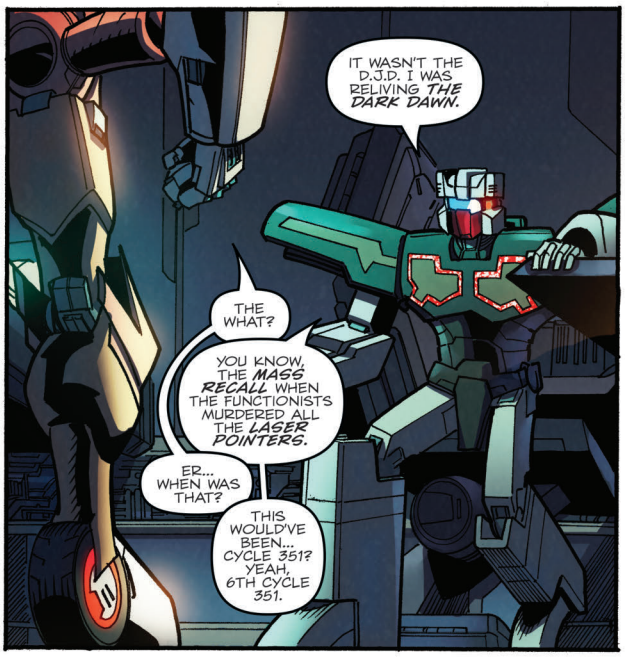
TAKE PRIDE IN BEING A MEANS TO AN END
...OR ARE THERE A LOT MORE OF YOU AROUND?
NOT SO MUCH MORE OF ME— JUST FEWER OTHER PEOPLE.
DATA-SLUG IS NOW THE THIRD MOST UBIQUITOUS ALT MODE, AFTER ENERGON DISPENSER AND SHORT-RANGE COMMUNICATOR.
THEY HAD TO ADJUST THE GRAND CYBERTRONIAN TAXONOMY AFTER THE LAST MASS RECALL.
ANOTHER RECALL? WHO WAS IT THIS TIME, THE LASER POINTERS? BECAUSE THEY WERE ALREADY OUTMODED WHEN I LEFT...
OH, THEY WERE RECALLED AGES AGO. NO, IT WAS THE LUNABOTS.
BUT THEY WERE ASTRO CLASS— THE COUNCIL NEVER TOUCHES THE ASTRO CLASS...!
THEY NO LONGER SERVED A PURPOSE. IT'S NOT AS IF PEOPLE CAN TRAVEL TO THE MOON ANYMORE...
IS THERE A PROBLEM, OFFICER? I'M ALT MODE EXEMPT.
THIS STATUS SYMBOL IS OUT OF DATE.
I'VE BEEN AWAY.
I'LL NEED PROOF OF FUNCTION.
OF COURSE.

WHAT'S THIS? WHAT AM I LOOKING AT?
I'M A MINESWEEPER.
NOT A DESIGN I RECOGNIZE...
AS I SAID—
—I'VE BEEN AWAY.
I'M GOING TO HAVE TO EXAMINE YOUR TRANSFORMATION COG.
NOW WAIT A MINUTE. YOU CAN'T SEARCH MY CHEST WITHOUT A WARRANT.
IF YOU PERFORM A USEFUL FUNCTION YOU'VE GOT NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT, SIR. NOW OPEN UP BEFORE I FORCE MY WAY IN.
THIS IS A GROSS INVASION OF MY PRIVACY.
NEW POWERS. YOU WANT SOMEONE TO BLAME, BLAME THE PRETENDERS.
THE WHO?
SOCIAL CLIMBERS—MAINLY MANUAL WORKERS AND SERVICE 'BOTS. COMMONERS WHO'VE HAD ENOUGH OF THE BOTTOM RUNG.
THEY TRY TO PASS THEMSELVES OFF AS MEMBERS OF THE SCIENTIFIC OR FLIGHT CLASSES BY ADDING CONSPICUOUS KIBBLE.
10,000 SHANIX WILL GET YOU A CHEST-MOUNTED COCKPIT. 20,000, AND YOU CAN STICK A MICROSCOPE ON YOUR BACK.
AMAZING, THE LENGTHS SOME PEOPLE WILL GO TO CROSS CLASS BOUNDARIES.
TWO MILLION YEARS, MINIMUS—IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT ANYMORE.
A BETTER CLASSIFICATION MEANS BETTER FUEL, BETTER PAY, BETTER—
OUTTA MY WAY!
STOP THAT 'BOT!
OOF!
SECU

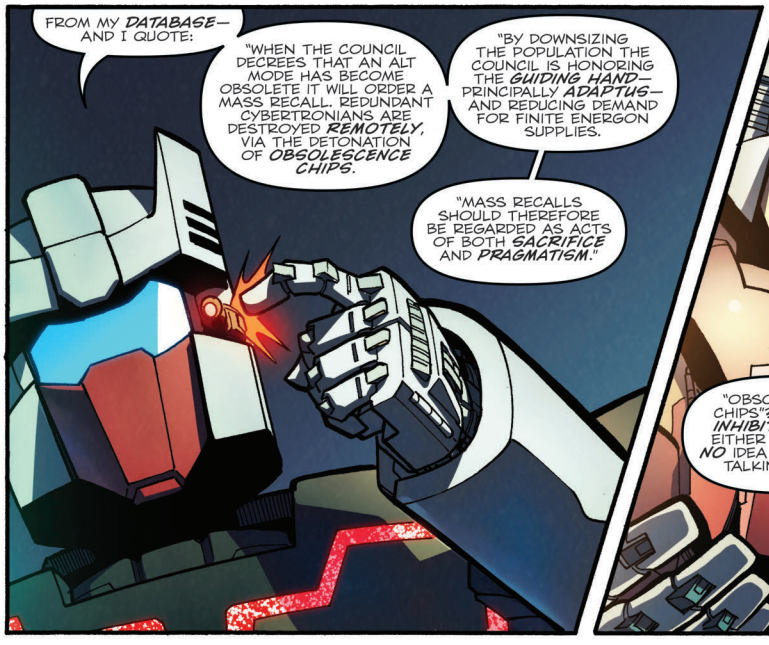
WHERE'D HE COME FROM?
I FOUND HIM HIDING IN THE HANGARS. HE'S DERANGED. THAT'S THE THING ABOUT OBS CHIPS—
"—SOMETIMES THEY ONLY DO HALF THE JOB."
THAT'S WHAT I'VE ALWAYS SAID—PEOPLE SLIP THROUGH THE NET.
THAT'S WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE COUNCIL TRIES TO DO THINGS FROM A DISTANCE.
I AGREE. SHOW ME ANYONE ON THE SURFACE WHO DOESN'T PREFER TO DO THIS—
—THE OLD-FASHIONED WAY.
KRAK
THIS IS FUNCTIONARY 66A TO THE COG.
SUBJECT IS TERMINATED.
REPEAT: THE LAST LUNABOT HAS BEEN RECALLED.
CYBERTRON. THE PRESENT DAY.

THE LOST LIGHT.
REWIND?
REWIND!
STAND AWAY FROM THE DOOR! I'M COMING IN!
WRUNCH
ARE YOU ALRIGHT? I'VE NEVER HEARD YOU MAKE A NOISE LIKE THAT...
I'M FINE. BAD DREAM, THAT'S ALL. MY FIRST FLASHBACK.
THESE THINGS'LL HAPPEN WHEN YOU'VE GOT A HEAD FULL OF HISTORY.
LOOK WHAT YOU DID TO MY DOOR...
WELL, I WOULDN'T HAVE TO BE ALL HEROIC IF WE LIVED TOGETHER.
AW, NOW C'MON, CHROMEDOME. WE'VE HAD THIS CONVERSATION. ONE STEP AT A TIME, WE SAID. DAY BY DAY.
I KNOW, BUT HEARING YOU CRY OUT AND NOT BEING ABLE TO REACH OVER, IT'S...
IT'S BAD IS WHAT IT IS. I DON'T SEE WHY WE CAN'T PICK UP WHERE WE LEFT OFF...
BECAUSE WE LEFT OFF AT DIFFERENT POINTS—AND WITH DIFFERENT PEOPLE. I'M STILL TRYING TO PROCESS WHAT YOU DID TO—
SORRY, WHAT HAPPENED TO THE OTHER REWIND...
"DIFFERENT" PEOPLE? THE "OTHER" REWIND? YOU'RE YOU AND I'M ME... WE ARE LITERALLY THE SAME PEOPLE.
WE ARE AND WE AREN'T. I DON'T KNOW. I DON'T KNOW WHAT I'M TRYING TO SAY. I'M TRYING TO DO RIGHT BY THE MEMORY OF CHROMEDOME. MY CHROMEDOME.
I AM YOUR CHROMEDOME!
AND I'M YOUR REWIND. OF COURSE I AM.
BUT?
LOOK, WE GOT HERE, WHAT, TWO HOURS AGO? AND STRAIGHTAWAY YOU GAVE ME THE OTHER REWIND'S STUFF.
YES! TO DECORATE THE NEW HAB SUITE YOU ASKED FOR...!
WHAT? YOU COULDN'T SALVAGE ANYTHING FROM YOUR LOST LIGHT, SO... I REALLY DON'T SEE WHY IT'S A BIG DEAL.


THAT ORNAMENT. THE RUBY. ON A PLINTH. YOU KNOW...
THE RAGING PRISM. IT'S A SOUVENIR FROM HEDONIA. YOU BOUGHT IT IN THAT CHINTZY LITTLE GIFT SHOP AND—
AND THAT'S MY POINT. I'VE NEVER BEEN TO HEDONIA. THE OTHER REWIND HAS; I HAVEN'T.
YOU'RE GIVING ME HIS STUFF, AND THAT MAKES THIS—THAT MAKES THIS ALL KIND OF... WEIRD.
YEAH, NO, I GET THAT. YOU NEED TO ADJUST, AND THAT'S... I GET IT. AND I WILL. I'LL TRY; I'LL TRY TO BE PATIENT. I PROMISE.
...
DID YOU WANT TO TALK ABOUT YOUR FLASHBACK? IF IT WAS THE D.J.D., MY OFFER STILL STANDS. JUST SAY THE WORD.

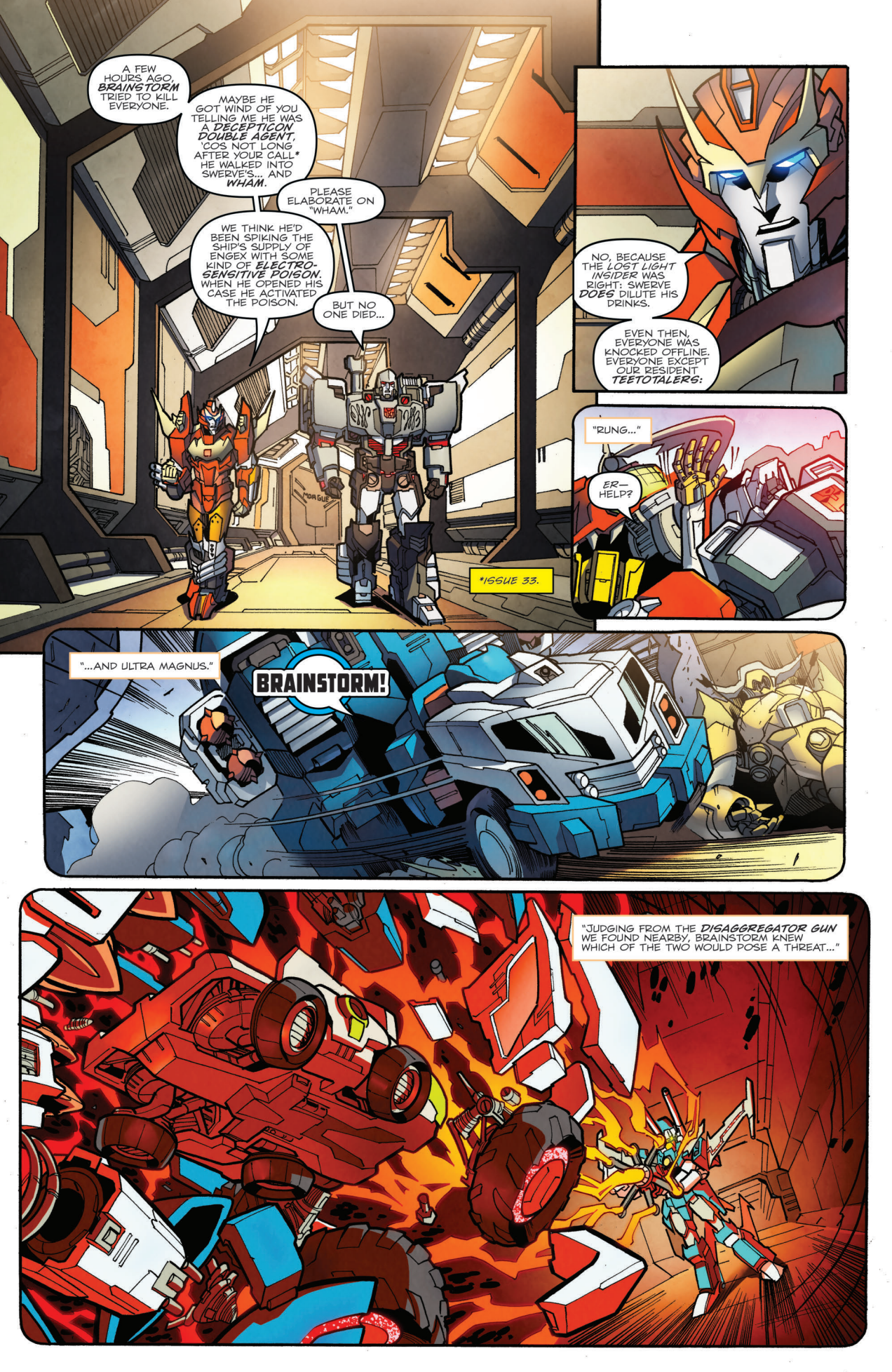

IT WASN'T THE D.J.D. I WAS RELIVING THE DARK DAWN.
THE WHAT?
YOU KNOW, THE MASS RECALL WHEN THE FUNCTIONISTS MURDERED ALL THE LASER POINTERS.
ER... WHEN WAS THAT?
THIS WOULD'VE BEEN... CYCLE 351? YEAH, 6TH CYCLE 351.

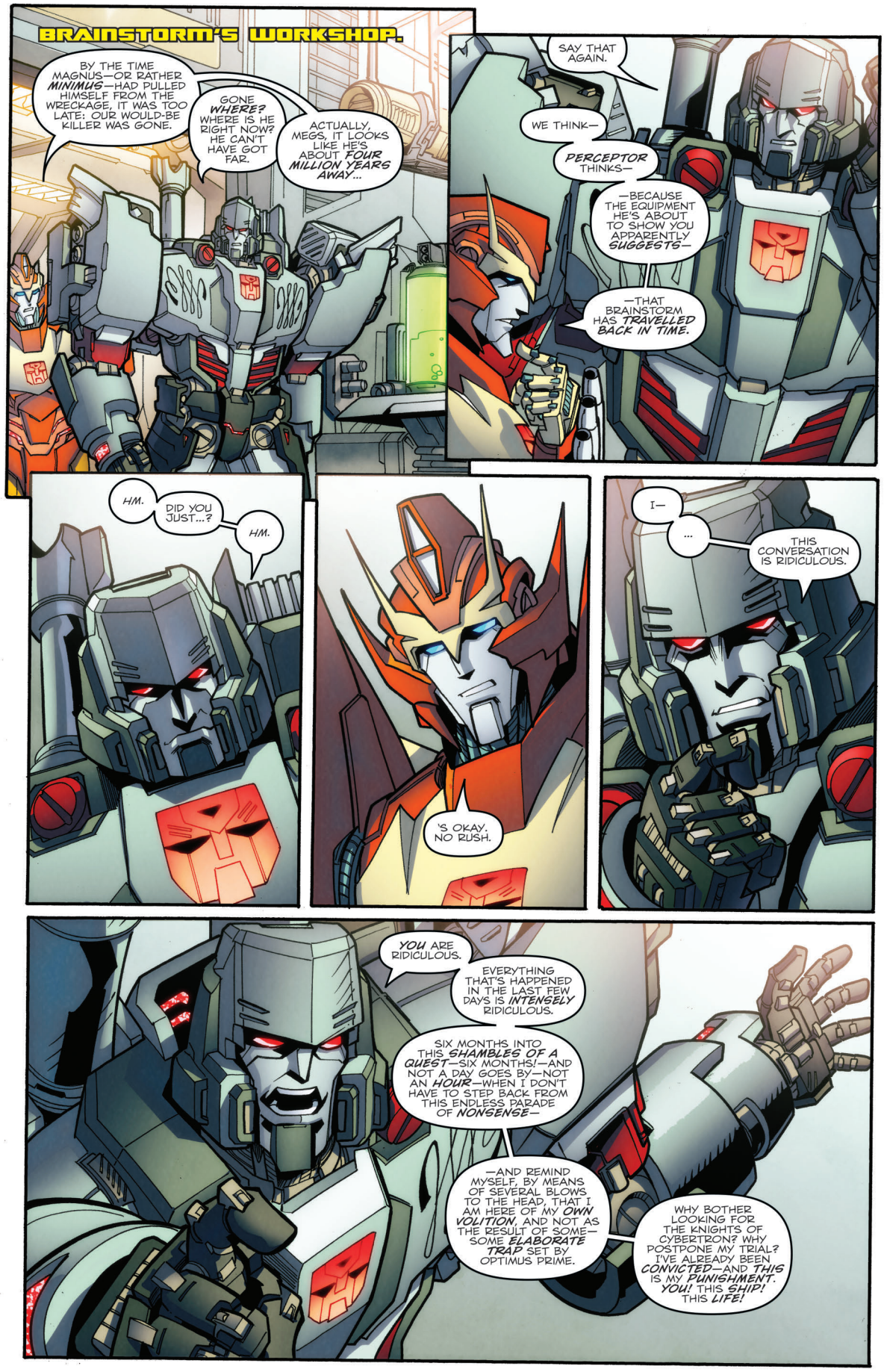
BUT THAT'S HALF A MILLION YEARS AGO—THE FUNCTIONISTS WERE LONG GONE. CYCLE 351... WE WERE IN THE MANGANESE MOUNTAINS, FIGHTING SCORPONOK—AS WAS SHIMMERSTICK.
AND HE TURNED INTO A LASER POINTER.
IT WASN'T A FLASHBACK, REWIND. I THINK YOU JUST IMAGINED IT. THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS A "MASS RECALL."

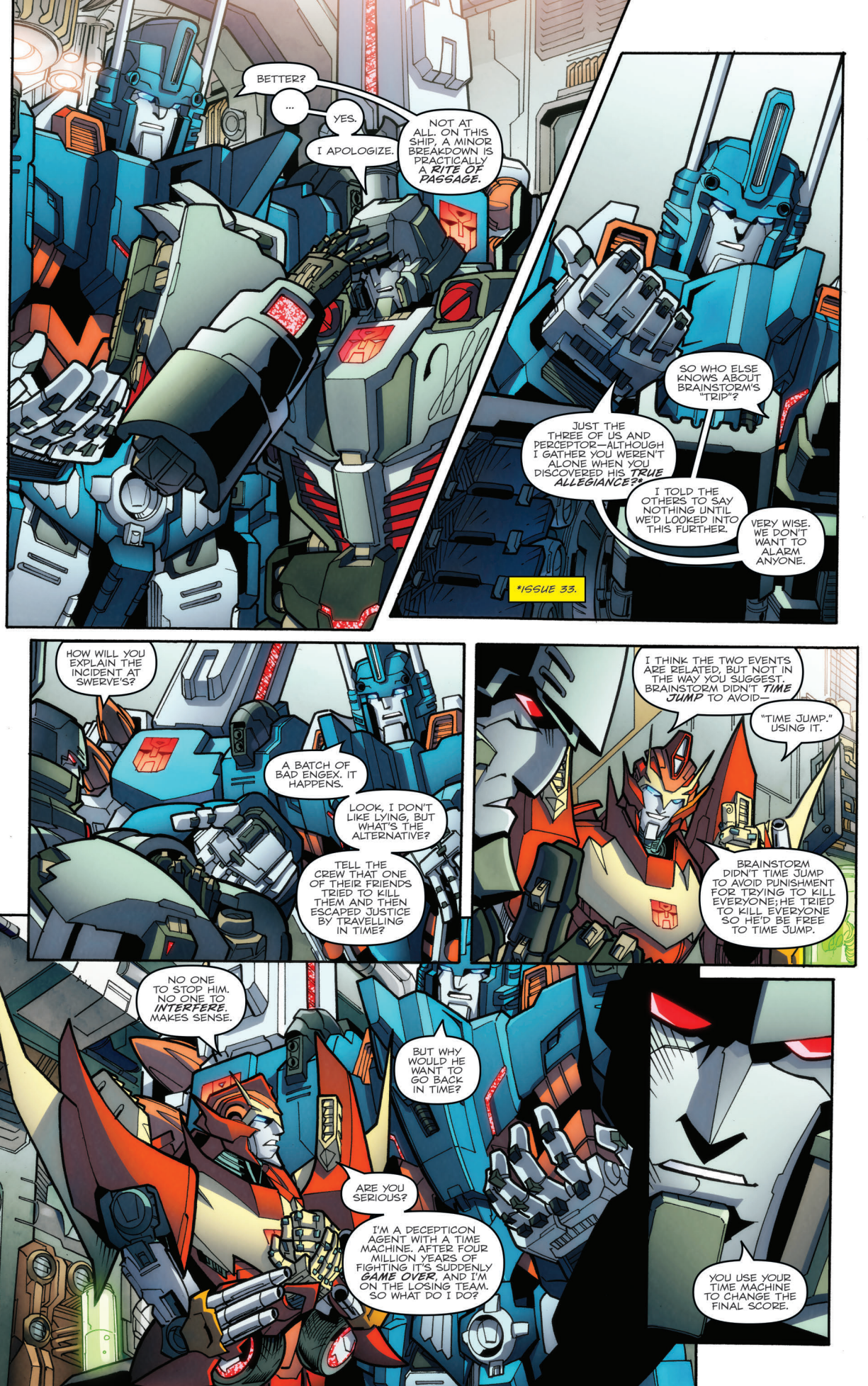

FROM MY DATABASE— AND I QUOTE:
"WHEN THE COUNCIL DECREES THAT AN ALT MODE HAS BECOME OBSOLETE IT WILL ORDER A MASS RECALL. REDUNDANT CYBERTRONIANS ARE DESTROYED REMOTELY, VIA THE DETONATION OF OBSOLESCENCE CHIPS.
"BY DOWNSIZING THE POPULATION THE COUNCIL IS HONORING THE GUIDING HAND— PRINCIPALLY ADAPTUS— AND REDUCING DEMAND FOR FINITE ENERGON SUPPLIES.
"MASS RECALLS SHOULD THEREFORE BE REGARDED AS ACTS OF BOTH SACRIFICE AND PRAGMATISM."

"OBSOLESCENCE CHIPS"? YOU MEAN INHIBITOR CHIPS? EITHER WAY, I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.
I—
WHAT AM I TALKING ABOUT?
WHAT'S MY DATABASE TALKING ABOUT?
WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME?

TEN FLOORS DOWN. THE MORGUE.
CONGRATULATIONS. THIS IS THE LAST PLACE I EXPECTED TO FIND YOU.
GO AHEAD. TELL ME THAT TRAILCUTTER IS MY FAULT; THAT HE WAS KILLED BY "MY" D.J.D.
UNDER NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES? YEAH.
YEAH, THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT I'D SAY: YOU KILLED TRAILCUTTER AND YOU DAMN NEAR KILLED BLUE, FIRST AID, AND MAINFRAME.
"YOUR GROTTY LITTLE FAN CLUB BLEW THEM UP IN THEIR SHUTTLE— OR TRIED TO.
"A PARTING GESTURE BEFORE THEY FLEW BACK TO MEGATRON MOUNTAIN, OR WHEREVER THE HELL THEY LIVE."
YOU AND I NEED TO SIT DOWN AND DISCUSS RETALIATION— BUT NOT RIGHT NOW.
RIGHT NOW, WE'VE GOT MORE IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS.

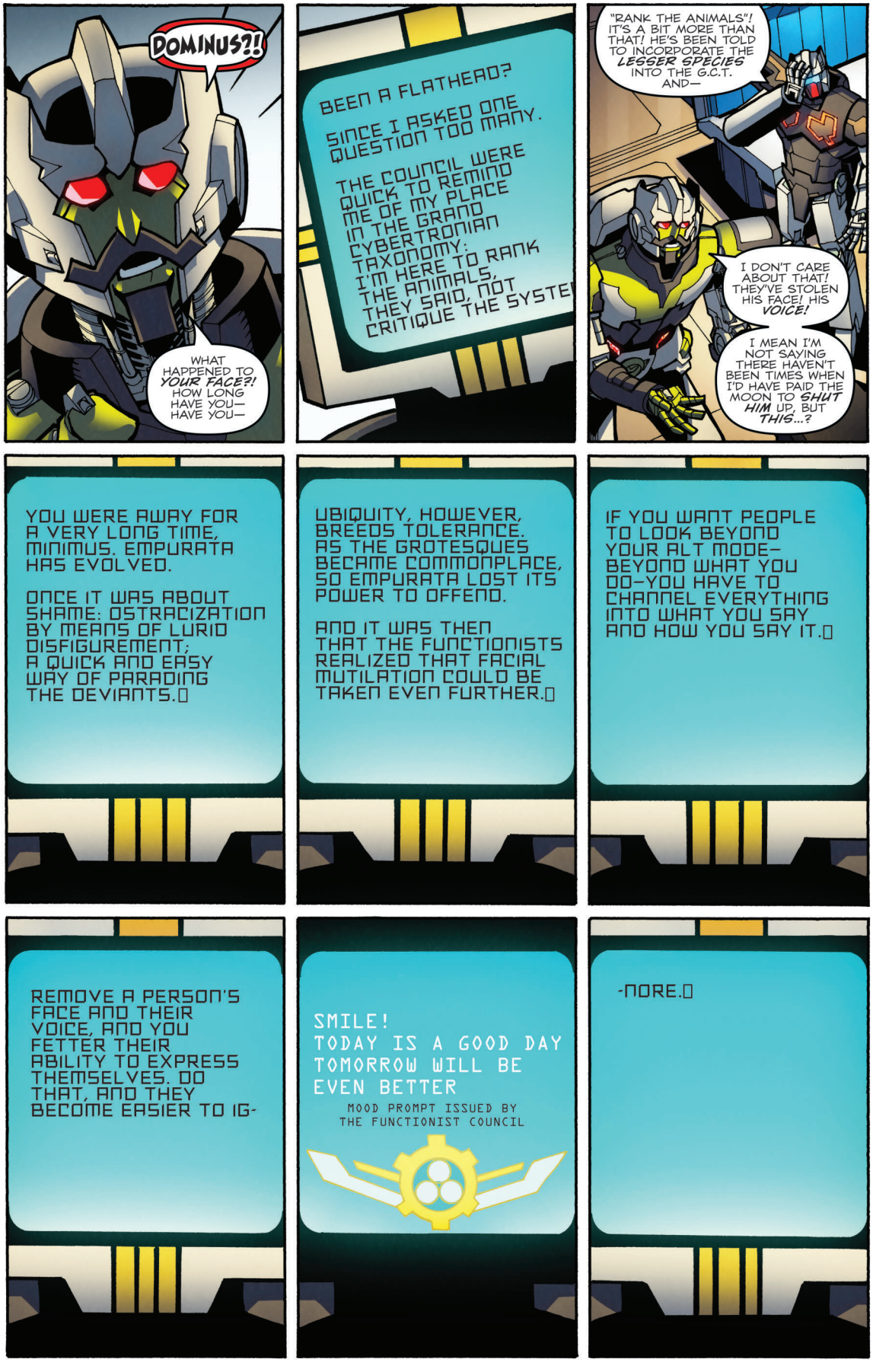

A FEW HOURS AGO, BRAINSTORM TRIED TO KILL EVERYONE.
MAYBE HE GOT WIND OF YOU TELLING ME HE WAS A DECEPTICON DOUBLE AGENT, 'COS NOT LONG AFTER YOUR CALL* HE WALKED INTO SWERVE'S... AND WHAM.
PLEASE ELABORATE ON "WHAM."
WE THINK HE'D BEEN SPIKING THE SHIP'S SUPPLY OF ENGEX WITH SOME KIND OF ELECTRO-SENSITIVE POISON. WHEN HE OPENED HIS CASE HE ACTIVATED THE POISON.
BUT NO ONE DIED...
NO, BECAUSE THE LOST LIGHT INSIDER WAS RIGHT: SWERVE DOES DILUTE HIS DRINKS.
EVEN THEN, EVERYONE WAS KNOCKED OFFLINE. EVERYONE EXCEPT OUR RESIDENT TEETOTALERS:
"RUNG..."
ER— HELP?
*ISSUE 33.
"...AND ULTRA MAGNUS."
BRAINSTORM!
"JUDGING FROM THE DISAGGREGATOR GUN WE FOUND NEARBY, BRAINSTORM KNEW WHICH OF THE TWO WOULD POSE A THREAT..."

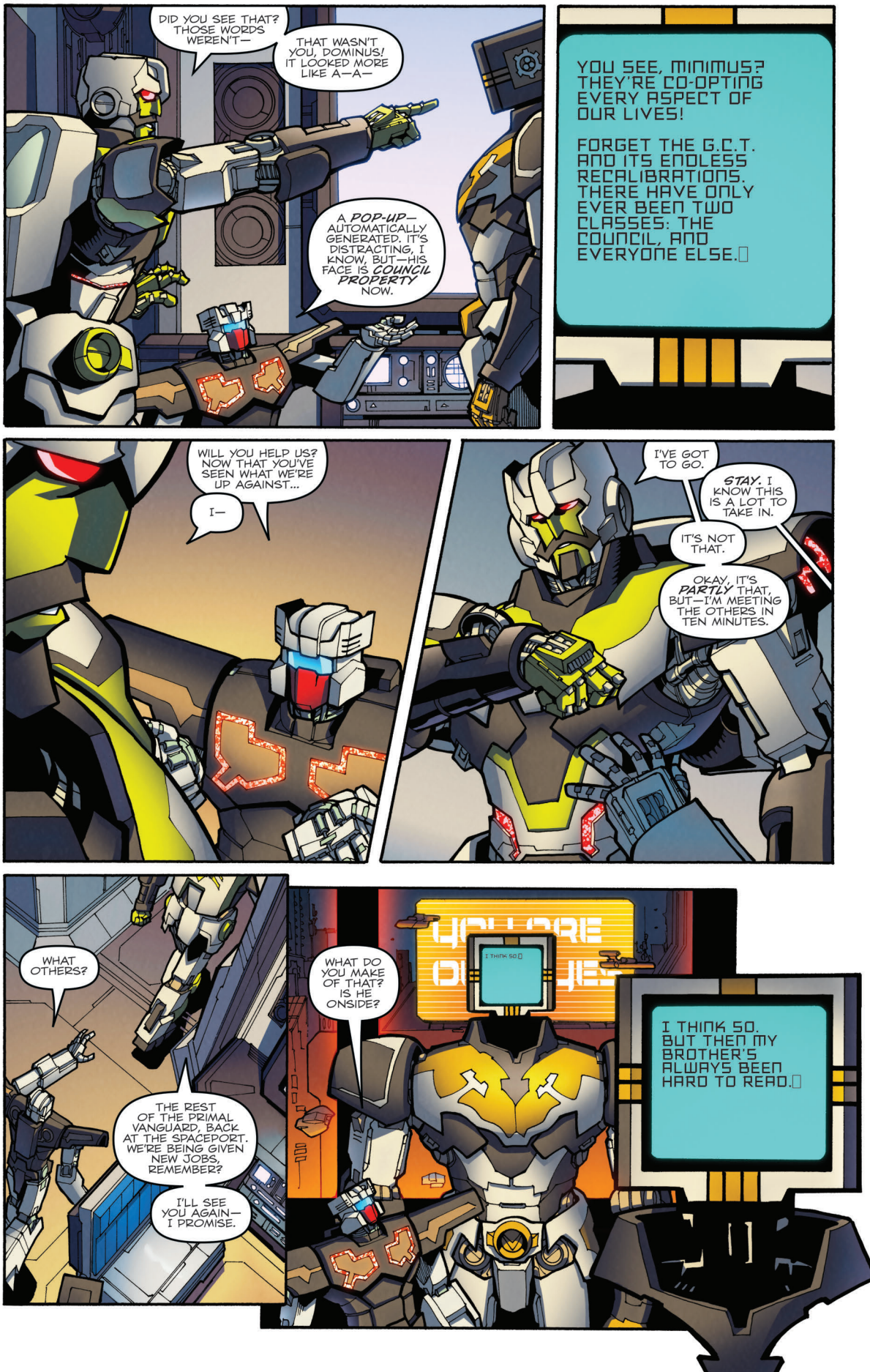

BRAINSTORM'S WORKSHOP.
BY THE TIME MAGNUS—OR RATHER MINIMUS—HAD PULLED HIMSELF FROM THE WRECKAGE, IT WAS TOO LATE: OUR WOULD-BE KILLER WAS GONE.
GONE WHERE? WHERE IS HE RIGHT NOW? HE CAN'T HAVE GOT FAR.
ACTUALLY, MEGS, IT LOOKS LIKE HE'S ABOUT FOUR MILLION YEARS AWAY...
SAY THAT AGAIN.
WE THINK—
PERCEPTOR THINKS—
—BECAUSE THE EQUIPMENT HE'S ABOUT TO SHOW YOU APPARENTLY SUGGESTS—
—THAT BRAINSTORM HAS TRAVELLED BACK IN TIME.
HM.
DID YOU JUST...?
HM.
'S OKAY. NO RUSH.
I—
...
THIS CONVERSATION IS RIDICULOUS.
YOU ARE RIDICULOUS.
EVERYTHING THAT'S HAPPENED IN THE LAST FEW DAYS IS INTENSELY RIDICULOUS.
SIX MONTHS INTO THIS SHAMBLES OF A QUEST—SIX MONTHS!—AND NOT A DAY GOES BY—NOT AN HOUR—WHEN I DON'T HAVE TO STEP BACK FROM THIS ENDLESS PARADE OF NONSENSE—
—AND REMIND MYSELF, BY MEANS OF SEVERAL BLOWS TO THE HEAD, THAT I AM HERE OF MY OWN VOLITION, AND NOT AS THE RESULT OF SOME—SOME ELABORATE TRAP SET BY OPTIMUS PRIME.
WHY BOTHER LOOKING FOR THE KNIGHTS OF CYBERTRON? WHY POSTPONE MY TRIAL? I'VE ALREADY BEEN CONVICTED—AND THIS IS MY PUNISHMENT. YOU! THIS SHIP! THIS LIFE!

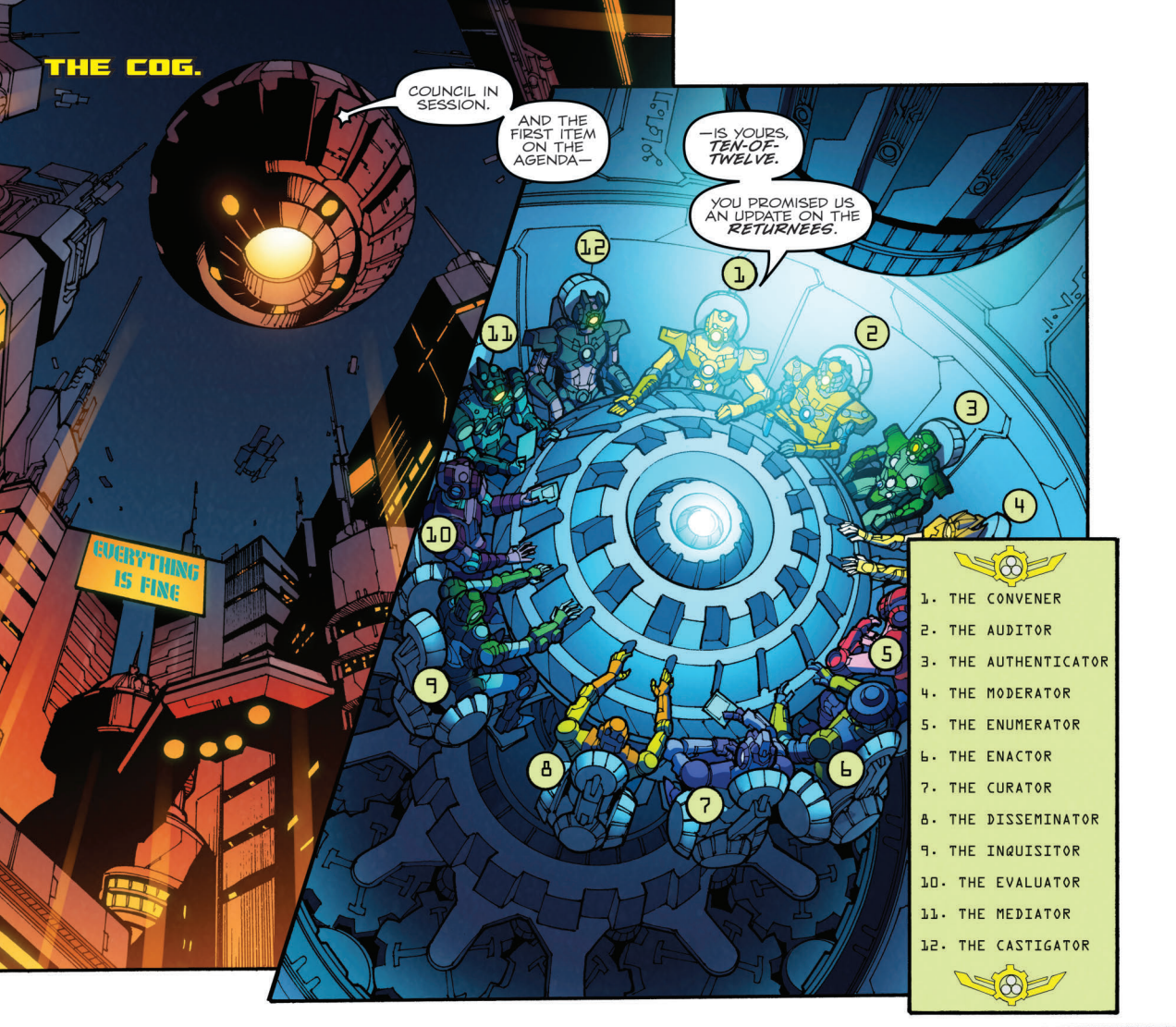

BETTER?
...
YES.
I APOLOGIZE.
NOT AT ALL. ON THIS SHIP, A MINOR BREAKDOWN IS PRACTICALLY A *RITE OF PASSAGE.*
SO WHO ELSE KNOWS ABOUT BRAINSTORM'S "TRIP"?
JUST THE THREE OF US AND PERCEPTOR—ALTHOUGH I GATHER YOU WEREN'T ALONE WHEN YOU DISCOVERED HIS *TRUE ALLEGIANCE?*
I TOLD THE OTHERS TO SAY NOTHING UNTIL WE'D LOOKED INTO THIS FURTHER.
VERY WISE. WE DON'T WANT TO ALARM ANYONE.
*ISSUE 33.
HOW WILL YOU EXPLAIN THE INCIDENT AT SWERVE'S?
A BATCH OF BAD ENGEX. IT HAPPENS.
LOOK, I DON'T LIKE LYING, BUT WHAT'S THE ALTERNATIVE?
TELL THE CREW THAT ONE OF THEIR FRIENDS TRIED TO KILL THEM AND THEN ESCAPED JUSTICE BY TRAVELLING IN TIME?
I THINK THE TWO EVENTS ARE RELATED, BUT NOT IN THE WAY YOU SUGGEST. BRAINSTORM DIDN'T *TIME JUMP* TO AVOID—
"TIME JUMP." USING IT.
BRAINSTORM DIDN'T TIME JUMP TO AVOID PUNISHMENT FOR TRYING TO KILL EVERYONE; HE TRIED TO KILL EVERYONE SO HE'D BE FREE TO TIME JUMP.
NO ONE TO STOP HIM. NO ONE TO *INTERFERE.* MAKES SENSE.
BUT WHY WOULD HE WANT TO GO BACK IN TIME?
ARE YOU SERIOUS?
I'M A DECEPTICON AGENT WITH A TIME MACHINE. AFTER FOUR MILLION YEARS OF FIGHTING IT'S SUDDENLY *GAME OVER*, AND I'M ON THE LOSING TEAM. SO WHAT DO I DO?
YOU USE YOUR TIME MACHINE TO CHANGE THE FINAL SCORE.

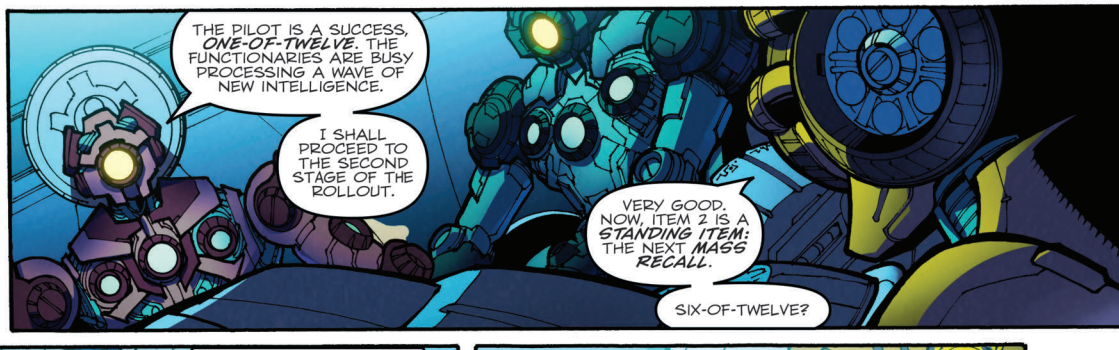
CYBERTRON.
DOMINUS?
DOM?
IT'S JUST US.
YOU ARE OUR EYES
YOU ARE OUR EYES
HE'LL BE AROUND SOMEWHERE. ACTUALLY, MINIMUS, THERE'S SOMETHING I'VE BEEN MEANING TO TELL YOU...
PEOPLE FIRST, JOBS SECOND!
WAIT— WHAT'S THIS?
THE COUNCIL'S WORST FEAR: THE WILLFULLY NON-EMPLOYED.
WHAT'S THAT IN HER HAND? IS THAT HER—
DID SHE JUST THROW HER TRANSFORMATION COG AT THAT FUNCTIONARY?
YES...
POK
...AND IT WAS THE BRAVEST THING SHE EVER DID.
IN THAT CASE... I FELT SICK.
AND SO YOU SHOULD. IT WAS APPALLING.
DOM SAYS THE MASS RECALL PROGRAM IS AN EXERCISE IN MUNICIPAL EUGENICS—AND IT'S TRUE!
THE COUNCIL EVEN TALK ABOUT "REFINING THE POPULATION," AS IF THEY'RE DOING US A FAVOR!
SO YOU ARE REBELS.
IT'S FAIR TO SAY WE HAVE... MISGIVINGS ABOUT THE COUNCIL. BUT DOM PUTS IT BETTER THAN I DO, SO—
DOMINUS! THERE YOU ARE!

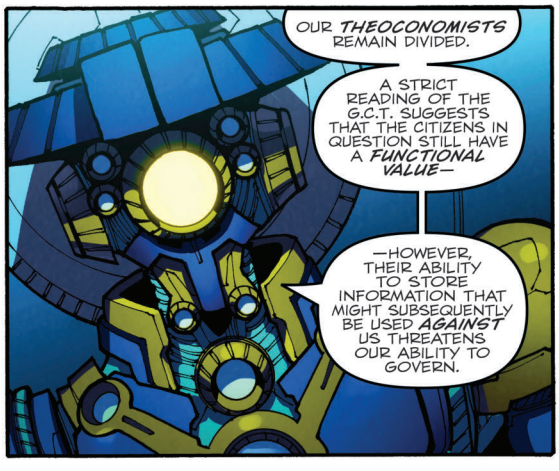
LIVE YOUR LIFE WITHOUT PURPOSE!
CHANGE EVERYTHING BY DOING NOTHING!
ALL HAIL THE USELESS ONE!
WHAT AM I WATCHING?
I GUESS THE BEST WAY TO ATTACK THE COUNCIL IS TO ATTACK YOUR ALT MODE.
I'M AMAZED THEY ALLOWED THAT TO BE BROADCAST.
THEY DIDN'T. DOM LIKES HACKING INTO THE COUNCIL'S SKY-SPIES. FOOTAGE LIKE THAT WON'T REACH A WIDER AUDIENCE.
WAIT A MINUTE, ARE YOU... ARE YOU REBELS?
HA! I—LOOK. BEFORE I ANSWER, LET ME ASK YOU A QUESTION. THE LUNABOT—HOW DID THAT MAKE YOU FEEL?
...
DON'T WORRY, THIS PLACE IS CLEAN.
NO BUGS, NO CAMS, NO PICK-UPS—FACT IT'S PROBABLY THE ONLY BLIND SPOT LEFT ON CYBERTRON.
HELLO, MINIMUS.
LONG TIME NO SPEAK.

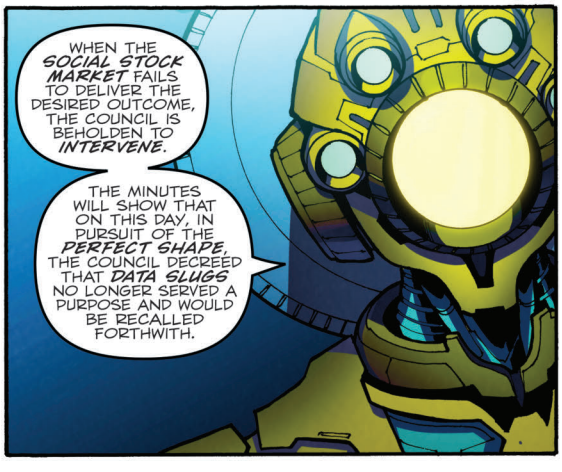

DOMINUS?!
WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR FACE?! HOW LONG HAVE YOU— HAVE YOU—
BEEN A FLATHEAD?
SINCE I ASKED ONE QUESTION TOO MANY.
THE COUNCIL WERE QUICK TO REMIND ME OF MY PLACE IN THE GRAND CYBERTRONIAN TAXONOMY: I'M HERE TO RANK THE ANIMALS, THEY SAID, NOT CRITIQUE THE SYSTE
"RANK THE ANIMALS"! IT'S A BIT MORE THAN THAT! HE'S BEEN TOLD TO INCORPORATE THE LESSER SPECIES INTO THE G.C.T. AND—
I DON'T CARE ABOUT THAT! THEY'VE STOLEN HIS FACE! HIS VOICE!
I MEAN I'M NOT SAYING THERE HAVEN'T BEEN TIMES WHEN I'D HAVE PAID THE MOON TO SHUT HIM UP, BUT THIS...?
YOU WERE AWAY FOR A VERY LONG TIME, MINIMUS. EMPURATA HAS EVOLVED.
ONCE IT WAS ABOUT SHAME: OSTRACIZATION BY MEANS OF LURID DISFIGUREMENT; A QUICK AND EASY WAY OF PARADING THE DEVIANTS.
UBIQUITY, HOWEVER, BREEDS TOLERANCE. AS THE GROTESQUES BECAME COMMONPLACE, SO EMPURATA LOST ITS POWER TO OFFEND.
AND IT WAS THEN THAT THE FUNCTIONISTS REALIZED THAT FACIAL MUTILATION COULD BE TAKEN EVEN FURTHER.
IF YOU WANT PEOPLE TO LOOK BEYOND YOUR ALT MODE— BEYOND WHAT YOU DO—YOU HAVE TO CHANNEL EVERYTHING INTO WHAT YOU SAY AND HOW YOU SAY IT.
REMOVE A PERSON'S FACE AND THEIR VOICE, AND YOU FETTER THEIR ABILITY TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES. DO THAT, AND THEY BECOME EASIER TO IG-
SMILE!
TODAY IS A GOOD DAY
TOMORROW WILL BE EVEN BETTER
MOOD PROMPT ISSUED BY THE FUNCTIONIST COUNCIL
-NORE.


DID YOU SEE THAT? THOSE WORDS WEREN'T—
THAT WASN'T YOU, DOMINUS! IT LOOKED MORE LIKE A—A—
A POP-UP— AUTOMATICALLY GENERATED. IT'S DISTRACTING, I KNOW, BUT—HIS FACE IS COUNCIL PROPERTY NOW.
YOU SEE, MINIMUS? THEY'RE CO-OPTING EVERY ASPECT OF OUR LIVES!
FORGET THE G.C.T. AND ITS ENDLESS RECALIBRATIONS. THERE HAVE ONLY EVER BEEN TWO CLASSES: THE COUNCIL, AND EVERYONE ELSE.
WILL YOU HELP US? NOW THAT YOU'VE SEEN WHAT WE'RE UP AGAINST...
I—
I'VE GOT TO GO.
STAY. I KNOW THIS IS A LOT TO TAKE IN.
IT'S NOT THAT.
OKAY, IT'S PARTLY THAT, BUT—I'M MEETING THE OTHERS IN TEN MINUTES.
WHAT OTHERS?
THE REST OF THE PRIMAL VANGUARD, BACK AT THE SPACEPORT. WE'RE BEING GIVEN NEW JOBS, REMEMBER?
I'LL SEE YOU AGAIN— I PROMISE.
WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF THAT? IS HE ONSIDE?
I THINK SO.
I THINK SO. BUT THEN MY BROTHER'S ALWAYS BEEN HARD TO READ.

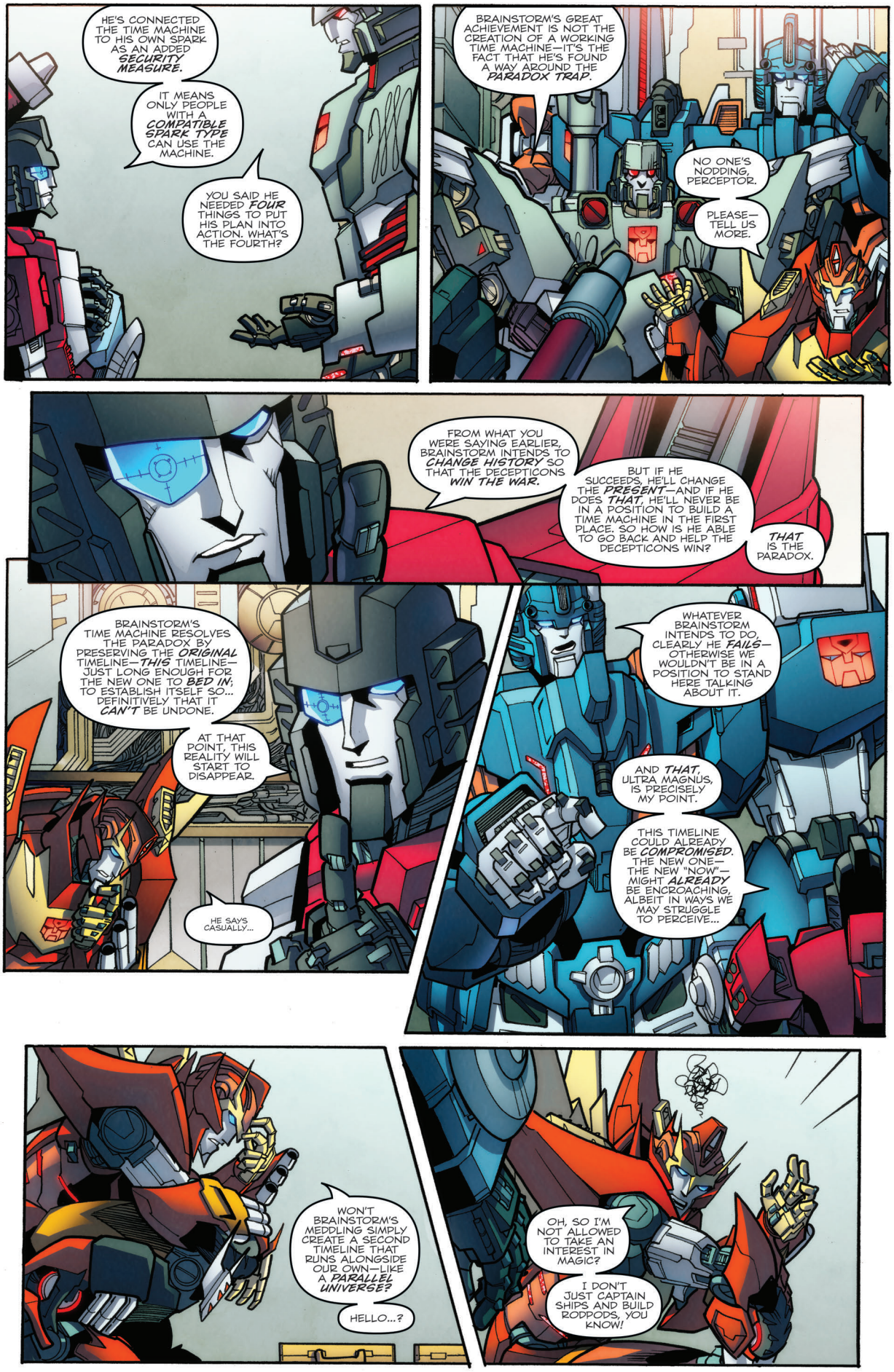

THE COG.
COUNCIL IN SESSION.
AND THE FIRST ITEM ON THE AGENDA—
—IS YOURS, TEN-OF-TWELVE.
YOU PROMISED US AN UPDATE ON THE RETURNEES.
EVERYTHING IS FINE
1. THE CONVENER
2. THE AUDITOR
3. THE AUTHENTICATOR
4. THE MODERATOR
5. THE ENUMERATOR
6. THE ENACTOR
7. THE CURATOR
8. THE DISSEMINATOR
9. THE INQUISITOR
10. THE EVALUATOR
11. THE MEDIATOR
12. THE CASTIGATOR


THE PILOT IS A SUCCESS, ONE-OF-TWELVE. THE FUNCTIONARIES ARE BUSY PROCESSING A WAVE OF NEW INTELLIGENCE.
I SHALL PROCEED TO THE SECOND STAGE OF THE ROLLOUT.
VERY GOOD. NOW, ITEM 2 IS A STANDING ITEM: THE NEXT MASS RECALL.
SIX-OF-TWELVE?


OUR THEOCONOMISTS REMAIN DIVIDED.
A STRICT READING OF THE G.C.T. SUGGESTS THAT THE CITIZENS IN QUESTION STILL HAVE A FUNCTIONAL VALUE—
—HOWEVER, THEIR ABILITY TO STORE INFORMATION THAT MIGHT SUBSEQUENTLY BE USED AGAINST US THREATENS OUR ABILITY TO GOVERN.


WHEN THE SOCIAL STOCK MARKET FAILS TO DELIVER THE DESIRED OUTCOME, THE COUNCIL IS BEHOLDEN TO INTERVENE.
THE MINUTES WILL SHOW THAT ON THIS DAY, IN PURSUIT OF THE PERFECT SHAPE, THE COUNCIL DECREED THAT DATA SLUGS NO LONGER SERVED A PURPOSE AND WOULD BE RECALLED FORTHWITH.

THE LOST LIGHT.
BRAINSTORM NEEDED FOUR THINGS TO PUT HIS PLAN INTO ACTION:
A TIME MACHINE; THE MEANS TO POWER THE TIME MACHINE; THE MEANS TO TRAVEL IN SPACE AS WELL AS TIME; AND—
HIS BRIEFCASE IS THE TIME MACHINE, RIGHT?
ACTUALLY...
...THEY ALL ARE.
ARE THEY CONNECTED?
THEY'RE PARTS OF THE SAME MACHINE, YES. BUILDING BLOCKS.
EACH ONE APPEARS EMPTY—THE COMPONENTS ARE HIDDEN WITHIN THE WALLS.
BRAINSTORM'S TAKEN ONE WITH HIM—THE CONTROL CASE—AND THAT'S THE ONE THAT MATTERS. IT CONNECTS HIM TO HERE AND NOW—ONE OF WHICH WON'T BE AROUND FOR MUCH LONGER.
AND HOW IS HE TRAVELLING IN SPACE? QUANTUM ENGINES?
CORRECT. A REMOTE CONNECTION.
THOUGHT SO.
I'M ON FIRE TODAY.


HE'S CONNECTED THE TIME MACHINE TO HIS OWN SPARK AS AN ADDED SECURITY MEASURE.
IT MEANS ONLY PEOPLE WITH A COMPATIBLE SPARK TYPE CAN USE THE MACHINE.
YOU SAID HE NEEDED FOUR THINGS TO PUT HIS PLAN INTO ACTION. WHAT'S THE FOURTH?
BRAINSTORM'S GREAT ACHIEVEMENT IS NOT THE CREATION OF A WORKING TIME MACHINE—IT'S THE FACT THAT HE'S FOUND A WAY AROUND THE PARADOX TRAP.
NO ONE'S NODDING, PERCEPTOR.
PLEASE—TELL US MORE.
FROM WHAT YOU WERE SAYING EARLIER, BRAINSTORM INTENDS TO CHANGE HISTORY SO THAT THE DECEPTICONS WIN THE WAR.
BUT IF HE SUCCEEDS, HE'LL CHANGE THE PRESENT—AND IF HE DOES THAT, HE'LL NEVER BE IN A POSITION TO BUILD A TIME MACHINE IN THE FIRST PLACE. SO HOW IS HE ABLE TO GO BACK AND HELP THE DECEPTICONS WIN?
THAT IS THE PARADOX.
BRAINSTORM'S TIME MACHINE RESOLVES THE PARADOX BY PRESERVING THE ORIGINAL TIMELINE—THIS TIMELINE—JUST LONG ENOUGH FOR THE NEW ONE TO BED IN; TO ESTABLISH ITSELF SO... DEFINITIVELY THAT IT CAN'T BE UNDONE.
AT THAT POINT, THIS REALITY WILL START TO DISAPPEAR.
HE SAYS CASUALLY...
WHATEVER BRAINSTORM INTENDS TO DO, CLEARLY HE FAILS—OTHERWISE WE WOULDN'T BE IN A POSITION TO STAND HERE TALKING ABOUT IT.
AND THAT, ULTRA MAGNUS, IS PRECISELY MY POINT.
THIS TIMELINE COULD ALREADY BE COMPROMISED. THE NEW ONE—THE NEW "NOW"—MIGHT ALREADY BE ENCROACHING, ALBEIT IN WAYS WE MAY STRUGGLE TO PERCEIVE...
WON'T BRAINSTORM'S MEDDLING SIMPLY CREATE A SECOND TIMELINE THAT RUNS ALONGSIDE OUR OWN—LIKE A PARALLEL UNIVERSE?
HELLO...?
OH, SO I'M NOT ALLOWED TO TAKE AN INTEREST IN MAGIC?
I DON'T JUST CAPTAIN SHIPS AND BUILD ROPPODS, YOU KNOW!

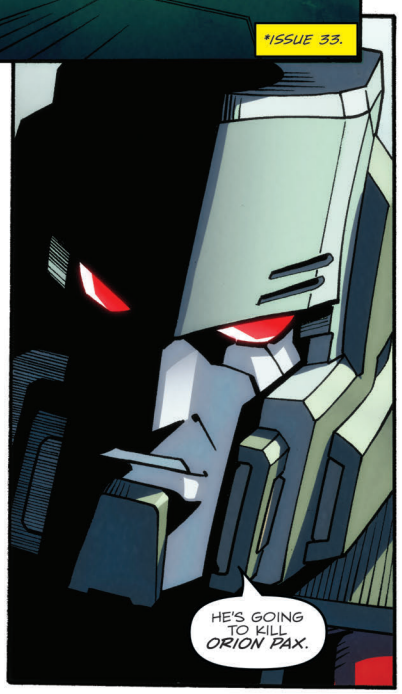
I'M SORRY, RODIMUS, BUT "PARALLEL UNIVERSES" WERE DISMISSED YEARS AGO AS A *FALSE CONSTRUCT*. THEY DON'T EXIST.
SADLY, THE CONCEPT ENCOURAGES *SECOND-RATE SCIENTISTS* TO AVOID THE MORE COMPLICATED IMPLICATIONS OF TIME TRAVEL.
I'LL SAY THIS FOR BRAINSTORM: HE CONFRONTED THOSE IMPLICATIONS HEAD-ON.

WHICH IS ALL VERY WELL, BUT WHAT DO WE DO NOW? TAKE HIS MACHINE APART? BLOW IT UP?
NO, THAT WOULD STRAND BRAINSTORM IN THE PAST—AND QUITE POSSIBLY *CEMENT* ANY CHANGES HE'S MADE. WILL MAKE. MIGHT MAKE.
IT'S TIME TRAVEL, PERCY. LEAVE YOUR TENSES AT THE DOOR.

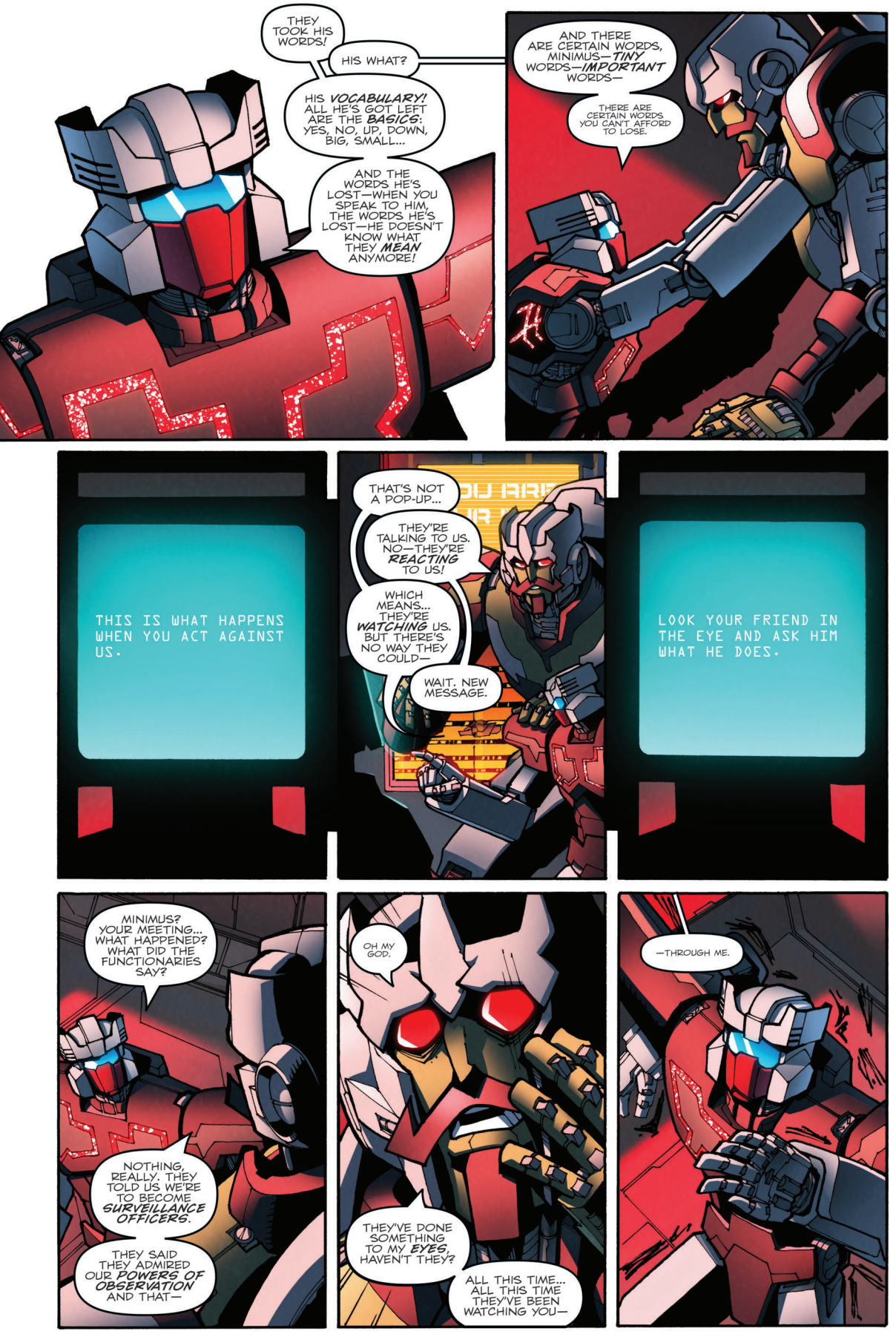
SO... WHAT? WE SIT BACK AND WAIT FOR THIS TIMELINE TO BE RENDERED OBSOLETE?
WE DO WHAT *YOU* DID WHEN BRAINSTORM TRIED TO POISON EVERYONE: WE *GIVE CHASE*.
THROUGH TIME.
YUP.
WE'D NEED OUR OWN CONTROL CASE.
WE HAVE ONE...

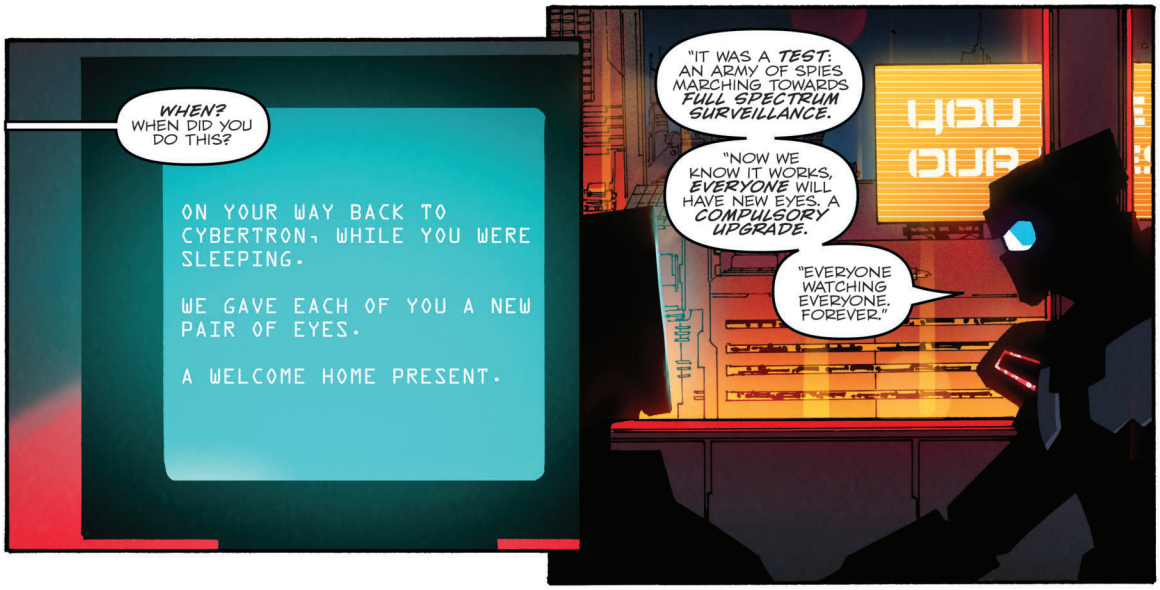
"...NIGHTBEAT FOUND IT ON THE OTHER *LOST LIGHT*."*
*ISSUE 33.

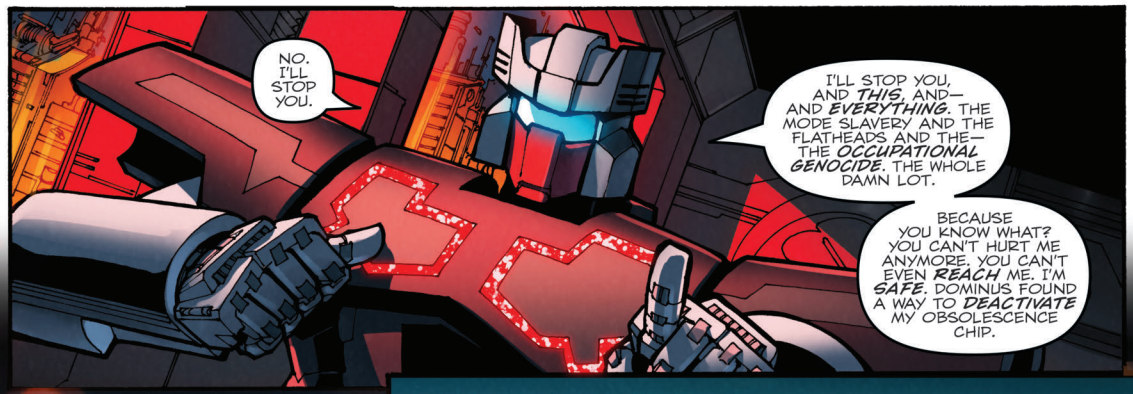
I APPRECIATE THAT EVERYONE IS VERY *EXCITED*, BUT MY ORIGINAL QUESTION STILL STANDS: WHAT IS BRAINSTORM ACTUALLY GOING TO *DO*?
OKAY, SO HE'S GOING TO HELP THE DECEPTICONS WIN, BUT *HOW*? WHAT *SINGLE ACTION* COULD CHANGE THE OUTCOME OF THE ENTIRE WAR?
WE WERE AT LOGGERHEADS FOR *FOUR MILLION YEARS*—IN ALL THAT TIME, WHAT WAS IT THAT PREVENTED THE DECEPTICONS FROM WINNING?
WHAT *OBSTACLE* IS BRAINSTORM LOOKING TO *REMOVE*?
WE HAVE AN *EXPERT* IN THE ROOM.
OVER TO YOU, MEGATRON. HOW'S BRAINSTORM GOING TO HELP YOUR OLD TEAM WIN THE WAR?
FOUR MILLION YEARS AGO? IT'S OBVIOUS.


HE'S GOING TO KILL *ORION PAX*.

CYBERTRON.
H—
AKK! HAKK!
HELP!
POK
YOU ARE OUR EYES
IT IS AN OFFENCE TO TAMPER WITH THE RECENTLY RECALLED. A HARVESTER UNIT WILL BE ALONG SHORTLY.
REPEAT: IT IS AN OFFENSE TO—
REWIND!
ALL THE DATA SLUGS ARE BEING RECALLED! YOU NEED TO, I DON'T KNOW, HIDE OR SOMETHING BEFORE THEY—
I'M ALRIGHT. IT'S DOMINUS...
TELL YOUR SPARK BROTHER WHAT THE FUNCTIONISTS HAVE DONE TO YOU.
ERROR. PLEASE REPEAT.


THEY TOOK HIS WORDS!
HIS WHAT?
HIS VOCABULARY! ALL HE'S GOT LEFT ARE THE BASICS: YES, NO, UP, DOWN, BIG, SMALL...
AND THE WORDS HE'S LOST—WHEN YOU SPEAK TO HIM, THE WORDS HE'S LOST—HE DOESN'T KNOW WHAT THEY MEAN ANYMORE!
AND THERE ARE CERTAIN WORDS, MINIMUS—TINY WORDS—IMPORTANT WORDS—
THERE ARE CERTAIN WORDS YOU CAN'T AFFORD TO LOSE.
THIS IS WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU ACT AGAINST US.
THAT'S NOT A POP-UP...
THEY'RE TALKING TO US. NO—THEY'RE REACTING TO US!
WHICH MEANS... THEY'RE WATCHING US. BUT THERE'S NO WAY THEY COULD—
WAIT. NEW MESSAGE.
LOOK YOUR FRIEND IN THE EYE AND ASK HIM WHAT HE DOES.
MINIMUS? YOUR MEETING... WHAT HAPPENED? WHAT DID THE FUNCTIONARIES SAY?
NOTHING, REALLY. THEY TOLD US WE'RE TO BECOME SURVEILLANCE OFFICERS.
THEY SAID THEY ADMIRED OUR POWERS OF OBSERVATION AND THAT—
OH MY GOD.
THEY'VE DONE SOMETHING TO MY EYES, HAVEN'T THEY?
ALL THIS TIME... ALL THIS TIME THEY'VE BEEN WATCHING YOU—
—THROUGH ME.


WHEN? WHEN DID YOU DO THIS?
ON YOUR WAY BACK TO CYBERTRON, WHILE YOU WERE SLEEPING.
WE GAVE EACH OF YOU A NEW PAIR OF EYES.
A WELCOME HOME PRESENT.
"IT WAS A TEST: AN ARMY OF SPIES MARCHING TOWARDS FULL SPECTRUM SURVEILLANCE.
"NOW WE KNOW IT WORKS, EVERYONE WILL HAVE NEW EYES. A COMPULSORY UPGRADE.
"EVERYONE WATCHING EVERYONE. FOREVER."


NO. I'LL STOP YOU.
I'LL STOP YOU, AND THIS, AND— AND EVERYTHING. THE MODE SLAVERY AND THE FLATHEADS AND THE— THE OCCUPATIONAL GENOCIDE. THE WHOLE DAMN LOT.
BECAUSE YOU KNOW WHAT? YOU CAN'T HURT ME ANYMORE. YOU CAN'T EVEN REACH ME. I'M SAFE. DOMINUS FOUND A WAY TO DEACTIVATE MY OBSOLESCENCE CHIP.

The Custom-Made Now - An Elegant Chaos Prologue